

VZCZCXRO6008  
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHPW RUEHSK RUEHVK  
RUEHYG  
DE RUEHNT #0097/01 0601238  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 250911Z FEB 10  
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1927  
INFO ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
CIS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 18 TASHKENT 000097

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
G/TIP  
G-LAURA PENA  
SCA/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [KTIP](#) [KMCA](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: Uzbekistan: Submission for 10th Annual Trafficking in  
Persons Report

REF: 10 STATE 2094; 09 STATE 196

TASHKENT 00000097 001.2 OF 018

[1](#)A. (U) Per reftel, post submits the following information for  
the tenth annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. The  
information covers the period from February 2009 to mid-February  
[1](#)2010.

[1](#)B. (U) Embassy Tashkent's TIP point of contact is:

Holly Lindquist Thomas

Pol/Econ Officer

Tel: (998-71) 120-5450

Fax: (998-71) 120-6335

E-mail: ThomasHL@state.gov

[1](#)C. (U) The number of hours spent on preparation of this  
report:

P/E officers: 52

USAID: 1

PAS: 2

Responses to Paragraph 25: The Country's TIP Situation

-----

[1](#)A. Sources of information on human trafficking include: the  
Government of Uzbekistan (GOU), the International Organization for  
Migration (IOM), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in  
Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
(UNODC), USAID, local TIP-focused NGOs, and local press reports.  
These are reliable sources, and they adequately document TIP issues  
in Uzbekistan.

[1](#)B. Uzbekistan is primarily a source country for trafficking in

persons. The government's Center for the Study of Public Opinion (Ijtimoiy Fikr) published a study in November stating that 78.3 percent of trafficking victims are involved in labor exploitation (62.9 percent in the construction sector, 15.4 percent in the agricultural sector) and 14.7 percent are involved in sexual exploitation. Most female victims of sexual exploitation were trafficked to the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Russia, Thailand, Turkey, India, Israel, Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan. There are more limited reports of sex trafficking to Indonesia and China. There have been no significant changes to destination countries since last year's TIP report submission.

Men are mainly trafficked to Kazakhstan and Russia for the purpose of forced labor. Labor trafficking victims originate from all over the country, but in especially high numbers from Karakalpakstan, Surkhandarya, and the Ferghana Valley. (Note: The prosecutor of northwestern Karakalpakstan reported to the press in November that the human trafficking rate increased by 36.7 percent in Karakalpakstan during the first 10 months of 2009, with 82 labor trafficking cases, 22 more than the same period in 2008. A regional police officer reported to the press in September that in the Ferghana region, 60 cases of human trafficking were initiated in the first eight months of 2009.) Victims of sex trafficking more often come from the cities of Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand.

Internal trafficking also occurs, with men and women generally being trafficked from rural to urban areas for sexual or labor exploitation. Internal trafficking takes place in the agricultural sector, the construction industry, the domestic service industry,

TASHKENT 00000097 002.2 OF 018

and in other forms of unskilled labor. In order to work legally in a particular region or city, a citizen must register with the local administration and obtain a permission stamp in his or her passport. Those living and working in a city without that stamp are doing so illegally and are subject to fines, jail time, and removal from the city. Traffickers are known to withhold pay and or/identification documents and to threaten to inform police of people who are working illegally.

The leading anti-trafficking NGO during the first nine months of the year registered 617 cases of human trafficking, involving 371 female victims and 247 male victims, compared to 529 cases in 2008 and 659 cases in 2007. The NGO registered a total of 778 victims for the whole calendar year of 2009, including 485 female and 293 male. The government stated that the total number of trafficking victims was 4,660, including 4,016 men and 644 women.

Forced labor of both adults and children occurs throughout the country during the fall cotton harvest, due in large part to a rigid quota system that demands that each local unit produce a set amount of cotton. In order to meet the quota, local officials frequently close schools and send the children to the fields to pick cotton. Reports over the past two years suggest that this practice is concentrated in the ninth through twelfth grades, but in some rural areas even primary schools are closed so that children may assist in the harvest. Government workers, including teachers, medical personnel, and local bureaucrats are also sent to work in the cotton fields during the fall harvest, and there was anecdotal evidence that this practice was used in the 2009 harvest more extensively than in the past, perhaps because fewer children were utilized. There are no reliable estimates on the number of victims of forced labor during the cotton harvest.

1C. (U) Both labor and sex trafficking victims are generally subjected to poor living conditions once they arrive in the destination countries. One local report described the typical

conditions for victims of labor trafficking in Russia and Kazakhstan, noting that five to 15 people frequently live in a small room or basement, often in unsanitary conditions. People who work in the agricultural sector sometimes live in barracks on the farms at which they work, particularly in Kazakhstan. Women trafficked for sexual exploitation report that in the UAE (the primary destination point for sex trafficking), 10-15 women typically share one small apartment.

Typically, traffickers withhold victims' passports and other identification documents, often under the pretense of obtaining official registration, and then threaten to turn victims over to immigration authorities or police for prosecution or deportation. This is effective, as victims are usually aware that they entered a country illegally, either because they supplied false documents, avoided inspection altogether, or misrepresented their stated purpose of travel. Victims are generally entirely dependent on the traffickers for food and shelter and are asked to repay exorbitant costs to satisfy alleged debts to traffickers.

Adults and children working in the cotton fields often face long hours of physically demanding labor. There have been reports that children are not provided with adequate food, drinking water, and suitable lodging if they are bussed too far from their homes to return there at night.

1D. Due to the poor economic conditions in Uzbekistan, vulnerability to labor trafficking is widespread and not restricted to certain groups. Men still make up the majority of labor trafficking victims, but more and more women are becoming involved. Some women accompany their husbands, intending to stay in the home to cook and clean while their husbands work during the day, but become victims when their passports are taken and they have no way to return. Other women go to work in the agricultural sector, domestic service, or even in construction, although in much smaller percentages than men. (Note: In December, the Chairwoman of

TASHKENT 00000097 003.2 OF 018

Uzbekistan's Women's Committee announced the results of a study showing that in 10 - 27 percent of the families studied, at least one person traveled abroad for work, and 23 percent of those who travelled were women.)

Women are the vast majority of victims of sex trafficking. Although there have been limited reports in the past three years of boys being trafficked to the UAE for sexual exploitation, there were no reports of such activity during this reporting period. Members of the NGO community and officials have voiced concerns this year that women who grew up in orphanages seem particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking, remarking that they are "easy prey" for traffickers promising a better life.

1E. Traffickers do not fit into one particular profile in Uzbekistan. In the past year there have been several reports of police breaking up trafficking rings involving groups of Russian citizens, sometimes with suspected links to organized crime. Even more common are reports of small-scale operations involving localized groups or even individuals linked to one or more contacts abroad.

Traffickers are known to pose as entrepreneurs and businesspeople offering jobs abroad, and most traffickers make contacts with the victims through family members or friends living in their own neighborhoods. Agents in nightclubs or prostitution rings are also

known to solicit women, some of whom are already engaged in prostitution. In large cities, traffickers used fraudulent newspaper advertisements for marriage and fraudulent work opportunities abroad to lure victims. Victims are offered jobs and decent salaries relative to low local salaries, and they are often told they will work in restaurants or as cleaners. False documents are often used to transport victims.

Women being trafficked for sex usually travel by air, often through secondary airports and transit routes in order to avoid officials trained in recognizing TIP cases at the international airport in Tashkent. For example, there are reports that women travel through Almaty, Kazakhstan; and Bishkek and Osh, Kyrgyzstan instead of flying through Tashkent for this reason. Labor trafficking victims are often moved across the border to Kazakhstan by bus or truck, or to Russia by train. Particularly in cases of sexual exploitation, victims are held in a form of debt bondage.

In the area of forced labor, school administrators and local hokims (mayors or governors) are directly responsible for closing schools and subjecting children to forced labor for roughly six weeks a year, but it has never been clear from what level of government those orders originate. Government officials are also responsible for sending government employees from their normal place of employment to the cotton fields.

Responses to Paragraph 26: Setting the Scene for the Government's Anti-TIP Efforts

-----  
-----  
1A. The government openly acknowledges that TIP is a problem. Major anti-TIP legislation was adopted in April 2008 and supplemented in September 2008 to strengthen the criminal penalties for trafficking offenders. Uzbekistan also adopted the UN Protocol on TIP and its own National Action Plan (NAP) to address Trafficking in July 2008. Government officials have steadily increased the amount of attention paid to the three major focus areas within the TIP field (prevention, prosecution, and protection), and cooperation with NGOs in fighting TIP continued to increase during the reporting period. This is in stark contrast to just a few years ago, when TIP was not acknowledged as a problem, and was considered taboo both by government officials and

TASHKENT 00000097 004.2 OF 018

in society at large.

The government does not openly acknowledge that forced labor of children or adults in the cotton sector is a problem. The practice of children harvesting cotton, in particular, dates back to Soviet times, and is often seen as doing one's duty for the state or community. The older generation is known to speak nostalgically about picking cotton in the fields, describing it almost as a rite of passage. The international response to this problem has also led to a strongly defensive stance among government officials right up to the president, who resents being criticized by NGOs and governments who do not (in his opinion) have a well-informed understanding of the situation here, but rather are subjecting Uzbekistan to "double standards" for political reasons that have nothing to do with concerns about child labor.

Despite this resistance, the government has taken some steps to address forced child labor. In March 2008 it ratified ILO Conventions 138 (On Minimum Age of Employment) and 182 (On Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor), and in September

2008 developed a National Action Plan on the implementation of ILO Conventions, which called for the abolishment of the mobilization of children in the annual cotton harvest. (Note: In March 2009, the ILO officially registered Uzbekistan's ratification of Convention 138, and 182 was officially registered in June 2008.) The government is finding ways to address the child labor problem pursuant to these documents, but it does so in a very private manner and not always in ways that the international community would prefer. The government has not taken steps to address the forced labor of adults, which is believed to be done on a much smaller scale than that of children.

B. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), National Security Service (NSS), the State Customs Committee, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MOL), the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), parliament, and the National Women's Committee are all involved in anti-trafficking efforts. The Interagency Commission to Counteract TIP provides high-level, high-visibility coordination of anti-TIP efforts. The Prosecutor General chairs the Commission, and other members include the Ministers of Internal Affairs, Justice, Economy, Health, Labor and Social Protection, the Chairwoman of the Women's Committee, Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, and Finance, Commander of the Border Guards, Chairman of the State Customs Committee, Director of the National Center for Human Rights, the Ombudsman for Human Rights, Chairman of the "Mahalla" Fund, Chairman of the Central Council of the Youth Public Movement "Kamolot," and the Director of the Center for the Study of Public Opinion. Pursuant to the NAP, each of the twelve provinces have also established local interagency committees. The Prosecutor General's Office generally has the lead on prosecution issues. MVD is the primary investigative body, and has a specific Anti-Trafficking Unit and a Department for Human Rights Protection that is involved in developing anti-TIP policies. The MOL takes the lead on victim protection, and administers the new TIP victims' shelter opened during the reporting period. Many of these parties, including the "Mahalla" Committees (traditional neighborhood units) and "Kamolot" youth movement, conduct prevention activities.

The bodies responsible for addressing forced labor issues include the MOL, the Prosecutor General's Office, Hokimiyat Commissions dealing with minors.

C. Government officials addressing the issue of trafficking are hampered by cultural taboos, corruption, lack of resources, and poorly developed criminal investigative techniques. Progress is being made in all of these areas, however. Print and television media routinely carry articles on trafficking now, and billboards are common throughout the capital of Tashkent warning of TIP-related dangers. Officials at local and national levels regularly address TIP issues publicly. A lack of funds is a limiting factor on the government's ability to address TIP, but the Head of the MVD's Trafficking Unit reported that despite this, it increased its TIP staffing throughout the country in 2009, notably increasing its numbers in Tashkent from eight to 16 and in Samarkand from six to 13. He reported that the total number of people in the MVD monitoring TIP cases is now 134. The MOL also opened the Republican Rehabilitation Center for TIP victims in November, the construction of which reportedly cost more than

TASHKENT 00000097 005.2 OF 018

173,000 USD. Thus, despite budget constraints, the government is moving forward on its efforts to address TIP.

The abolition of forced labor is hampered by the institutionalized cotton quota system, which places great pressure on every administrative unit, right down to the local plot level. Local hokims who could demand that the schools remain open may risk losing their positions and even facing financial penalties if their regions do not meet production goals.

1D. The Interagency Commission established in 2008 monitors the country's anti-trafficking efforts by carrying out inspections regarding implementation of anti-TIP legislation and the NAP. The MVD carries out initial investigations of TIP cases, and has a permanent working group to analyze TIP cases. The MOL and Prosecutor General's Office also have internal departments dedicated to carrying out the anti-trafficking agenda laid out in the NAP. The government announced TIP statistics (usually regional statistics) several times in the state-run press during the reporting period, and government officials frequently described their anti-efforts efforts in the media.

The government works with international organizations and NGOs on monitoring its efforts, and openly discusses its anti-trafficking efforts and challenges during conferences and study trips arranged with the support of international NGOs. OSCE representatives explicitly noted their appreciation for the active role that Uzbek delegations take in OSCE-sponsored conferences and study trips.

1E. The government establishes the identity of local populations through birth registration, which records citizenship and nationality.

1F. For the last few years, the government has been able to provide statistics on its TIP efforts, and the capability for gathering the data required for an in-depth assessment of law enforcement efforts seems to be improving. One shortfall in the past has been that different agencies and ministries sometimes report different statistics. This year, the government took efforts to address this problem, working with the UNODC to develop and install a TIP database that will be used in to assist in monitoring TIP efforts. UNODC completed procurement of all necessary hardware and software in February 2009, and in March 2009, conducted training for MVD personnel from each region of the country on the new system. The two sides are now working on identifying premises within the Ministry for location of the technical equipment and a trained administrator. This database is expected to be used on a daily basis by law enforcement around the country. It will standardize official statistics and facilitate better and more complete analysis of trafficking trends, and it is hoped that these measures will fill in any existing gaps in data-gathering capability in 2010.

Responses to Paragraph 27: Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers

-----

1A. On April 17, 2008, President Karimov signed into effect the law "On Combating Trafficking in Persons," which prohibits all crimes associated with trafficking, including trafficking of minors. The law defines key terms and principles of combating TIP; explicitly lists the state agencies with authority in counter-TIP activities and their responsibilities; lays out the interagency commission, its goals and representation; establishes special duties to victims of trafficking, including children; lays out security measures and other guarantees for victims of trafficking who participate in prosecutions; and ensures that international cooperation shall be in accordance with Uzbekistan's international agreements. The law also states that persons convicted of TIP offenses shall pay the expenses related to living and rehabilitation of TIP victims.

TASHKENT 00000097 006.2 OF 018

On September 16, 2008, Criminal Code Article 135 was overhauled, renamed from "Recruitment of Persons for Exploitation" to "Trafficking in Persons." It now includes provisions addressing sexual and labor exploitation in both the internal and



transnational contexts. The new code increased the maximum sentencing provisions from the previous maximum of eight years to the current maximum of 12 years. This increase is significant because amnesty may be granted to those convicted of crimes carrying prison terms of less than ten years, and thus is no longer available for those convicted of the most serious TIP offenses.

On November 24, 2009, the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan released instructions "On Proper Court Practice in TIP Cases." Notably, the decree clarifies that criminal liability attaches when there is an identified goal to exploit a person. It also instructs lower courts to "meticulously ensure" whether all person who have facilitated the TIP-related crime have been brought to responsibility.

Article 135 is meant to be the main prosecutorial tool for dealing with TIP offenses, and the Supreme Court stated in its November decree that additional criminal acts according to other articles of the criminal code should only be included when the other law stipulates stricter punishment than the relevant part of Article 135. Some other criminal provisions that continue to play a role in TIP prosecutions include: Article 137 (Kidnapping), Article 138 (Forced Illegal Imprisonment); Article 209 (Official Forgery); Article 210 (Receipt of Bribe); Article 211 (Giving a Bribe); as well as the related crimes of illegal border crossing, maintaining brothels, "procuration" of women, and entering a commercial sex transaction. Trafficking victims can also seek restitution under civil law. There were no additional changes to the criminal code regarding TIP during 2009.

Forced labor is addressed in the country's labor and administrative codes. Article 7 of the labor code prohibits forced or coerced labor except where authorized by law or necessitated by emergency. Articles 49 and 51 of the administrative code also address forced labor, imposing fines against officials of two to five times the minimum wage for violations. On December 21, 2009, President Karimov strengthened the penalties for using child labor with amendments to Articles 49 and 51. According to the amendments, public officials can now be fined five to ten times the minimum wage (124-377 USD) if the victim of forced labor is a minor. Also, ordinary citizens (including parents) for the first time may be fined one to three times the minimum wage (24-72 USD) for the forced labor of a minor.

In an effort to address Uzbekistan's obligations under the ILO conventions, President Karimov on December 24, 2009, signed changes and amendments to the labor code and to the law on "the guarantees of the rights of the child." The existing law set the minimum age for employment at 16, but allowed 15 year olds to work with the written permission of a parent and allowed 14 year olds to be involved in "light work" that did not hinder the education, health, or development of the child. The new law does away with the provision allowing 15 year olds to do light work.

On June 26, 2009, the Ministry of Labor released a list of activities involving unfavorable work conditions, in which children under the age of 18 cannot be involved. Cotton picking was included on that list.

On January 21, 2010, the MOL and the Ministry of Health put out a joint decree, "On Approval of Requirements on the Prohibition of the Use of Child Labor," which assigns responsibilities to employers and parents using child labor. Under the decree, parents and labor inspectors have the right to demand cessation of a labor agreement that was entered with a minor if the work threatens the health or well-being of the child. The decree entered into force on February 1, 2010.

Uzbekistan is also party to numerous international conventions that

TASHKENT 00000097 007.2 OF 018

deal with issues pertaining to TIP. Some of these include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified on March 23, 1995, stating that that slavery and slave-trade in all forms shall be prohibited, and that no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labor; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified on August 18, 1995, stating that parties shall take all appropriate measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women; the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, ratified on December 12, 2003, dealing with victim repatriation and assistance; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified July 29, 1994, requiring parties to take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

1B. Sex trafficking offenses carry a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 years in prison. Press reports confirm that offenders are indeed being punished with jail time and restitution payments. Legislation does not provide penalties explicitly for forced prostitution, but keeping a brothel and pimping are offenses punishable with fines of 25-50 times the minimum wage (about 628 - 1,250 USD) or three years of correctional labor. The same crime with involvement of a minor carries penalties of up to five years in prison.

1C. Sentences for labor trafficking range from three to 12 years imprisonment, and a review of press articles regarding TIP convictions suggests that an average prison term is about six years. Uzbekistan is a source country for labor trafficking, and Article 135 of the Criminal Code applies the same penalties for recruitment of victims as it does for other trafficking violations (three to 12 years). The country prohibits forced labor of adults and children through provisions in its administrative and labor codes, as mentioned above.

1D. Penalties for sexual assault in Uzbekistan range from three to seven years imprisonment. If the victim is under 14 years-old, the maximum penalty increases to 20 years in prison. Sexual assault by multiple persons can be punished by up to 15 years in prison.

1E. The government took consistent legal action against human trafficking offenders during the reporting period. In October, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that between January and September 2009, authorities opened 959 criminal cases against suspected traffickers: 318 for sex trafficking and 641 for labor trafficking. This is more than double the number of cases opened during the same period in 2009, in which the government opened 436 criminal cases.

For all of 2009, the MVD reported it investigated 1,978 reports of human trafficking. Following its initial investigation, MVD sent 927 cases to the Prosecutor General's Office, which prosecuted 815 of those cases, leading to convictions in 744 cases involving 1,198 defendants. Of those convicted, 960 received jail time, 116 received suspended sentences, 22 received correctional labor, three were fined, one received probation, and 96 were released with applications for amnesty. The average prison sentence ranged from five to eight years. (Note: A plea bargaining system is not yet in place for resolving TIP-related cases.) The government did not disaggregate these numbers, but if the figures from the first nine months of the year remained consistent, about one third of the



cases involved sex trafficking and about two thirds involved labor trafficking. The total number of victims was 4,660, of which 4,016 were men and 644 were women.

A common TIP-related problem in years past was that first-time TIP offenders were eligible for amnesty, and did not serve full prison terms. The Prosecutor General's office reported in October that this loophole has been narrowed. Currently, convicted women, minors, foreign nationals, and those suffering from serious health

TASHKENT 00000097 008.2 OF 018

problems may still apply for amnesty, but the vast majority may not. Moreover, if a trafficker is a repeat offender or if the damages to the victim(s) are severe, the trafficker is not eligible for amnesty despite any mitigating circumstances. The figures above indicate that amnesty was granted in roughly 8 percent of cases in 2009.

F. In 2009, the Prosecutor General's Office carried out 15 specialized trainings for law enforcement officials regarding TIP. Local offices also held seminars and roundtables for law enforcement officers. In conjunction with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office published brochures for TIP investigators with recommended methodology for investigating TIP cases.

In July, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) completed a three-year project with a local NGO to combat trafficking in persons and protect victims. The program trained about 1,300 law enforcement officers in prosecuting trafficking cases and providing assistance to victims.

The OSCE supports an anti-trafficking Training Center for Prosecutors, which it stocks with information on anti-trafficking standards and methodological guidelines, training equipment, technical facilities, books, and an anti-TIP educational database. On March 25, the OSCE sponsored a delegation of seven Uzbek officials and one NGO representative on a study trip to Moldova, Italy, and France. Two of the seven participants were from law enforcement.

UNICEF conducted a series of trainings for labor inspectors and others in every region of the country, and also supported the MOL training of about 200 labor inspectors in August 2009 in various inspection-related issues, including child labor (not specifically related to the cotton harvest, however).

G. The government has cooperative relationships and agreements with several countries, and is party to the Minsk Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Matters (among CIS countries). The government works closely with Interpol Tashkent on combating TIP. A representative from MVD reported in October that his office has good working relations with counterparts in Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan, as well as with law enforcement in the UAE. Relations also improved this year with officials in India. The government did not provide information on the number of cooperative international investigations, however, it has requested extradition from other countries in 112 cases during the reporting period. Of those, 82 were completed, two were refused due to the dual citizenship of the defendant, and two are in the process of being resolved. Of the 112 cases, 88 were to Russia, 21 to Kazakhstan, 2 to Kirghizstan, and one to India.

H. The Prosecutor General's Office reported that Uzbekistan has not received any extradition requests for a TIP offender. Theoretically, the government will extradite its citizens to another country if a bilateral extradition treaty is in place with that country.

I. There is no evidence of government involvement in traditional trafficking at an institutional level, and indeed, the government has made addressing sex and labor trafficking a priority. There have been reports of border guards and other low-level officials being in complicity with traffickers, though, taking bribes in return for allowing easy transit. Local NGOs also report that officials have falsified or sold travel documents or exit visas. Officials from the Prosecutor General's Office stated in October that they hope that implementation of a biometric passport program, to be completed in 2011, will help to make such practices more difficult, and will reduce such low-level corruption.

The government is intimately involved in the forced labor of children and adults in the cotton sector. Local hokims, perhaps at the behest of higher-ranking officials in the system, close schools or certain grade levels within schools and send children, usually by bus, to work in the cotton fields for four to six weeks during

TASHKENT 00000097 009.2 OF 018

the fall cotton harvest. Government officials are also responsible for sending state employees such as teachers, doctors, and local bureaucrats, to work in the cotton fields. On a macro scale, the government creates the need for adult and child forced labor by setting production quotas that can be very difficult to meet, and by not paying farmers enough that they can attract adult laborers to work on their own accord.

J. The Prosecutor General's office stated in February that it investigated one TIP case during the rating period involving 13 defendants, one of whom was a government official, and that the official was punished appropriately. No other information on investigations into official involvement in TIP was provided. The November 2009 Supreme Court Decree on TIP cases briefly addressed cases involving government officials, clarifying that the TIP offense related to abuse of official power (in Article 135) means the committing of a crime by an official or other person who uses his authority or office to assist in committing any of the other actions described in Article 135.

The government did not investigate and prosecute any officials for their involvement in the forced labor of children or adults during the reporting period, although in October it reported that it reprimanded 150 local administrators for allowing the use of forced child labor in the 2008 cotton harvest. Moreover, the Trade Minister announced in October that a few local hokims were replaced following the 2008 harvest because they allowed the use of child labor in their districts.

K. Uzbekistan does not contribute troops to international peacekeeping efforts.

L. Child sex tourism has not been an identified problem in Uzbekistan, and Uzbek citizens are not known as perpetrators of child sex tourism.

Responses to Paragraph 28: Protection and Assistance to Victims

-----  
A. Article 12 of the 2008 anti-TIP legislation states that investigators, prosecutors, and the court shall take security measures with respect to TIP victims who express their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in disclosing persons

suspected in trafficking. The NGO community states that victims who cooperate with law enforcement are indeed getting such protection. The law does not address the state's responsibilities to victims who do not cooperate with law enforcement, and in practice, they are not provided any assistance. Witnesses who participate in prosecutions are accorded some protection, including law enforcement escorts to and from trials, when necessary.

1B. On November 8, 2009, the government opened the Republican Rehabilitation Center, a 30-bed shelter that employs 20 nurses, one psychologist, one lawyer, and one social worker to assist victims with finding employment. The government announced well before construction was finalized that it had already spent 173,000 USD on the center, but in October officials stated that actual construction of the center cost much more. In February, officials stated that the government spent another 133,300 USD on equipping the center. The Center is the only shelter in the country that is open to men, as well as women and children, and reportedly has specialized care for all three groups. Victims generally may stay up to 30 days, but extensions are possible. Between November 2009 and February 2010, the Center has assisted 48 persons, including 40 women, seven men, and one minor.

Uzbekistan is not a destination country for trafficking, and during the reporting period officials recorded no cases of trafficking victims from other countries. Officials reported that the Rehabilitation Center is open to all victims of trafficking, however, including victims from other countries, should such cases arise.

In October, the Deputy Minister of Labor reported that after the

TASHKENT 00000097 010.2 OF 018

government has some experience with its new shelter, it will look at opening a regional center for TIP victims, perhaps in the Ferghana Valley, the Samarkand/Bukhara area, or Navoi, depending on the number of reported cases from each region. In February, an official from the same office reported that the opening of another shelter is probably at least one to two years down the road.

The anti-TIP NGO Istikbolli Avlod runs two shelters in the country, one in Tashkent and one in Bukhara. Both shelters provide medical, psychological, legal, and vocational assistance to female trafficking victims and their children, and both are currently funded by USAID and IOM grants. (Note: IOM is not registered in Uzbekistan but is allowed to conduct programming through Istikbolli Avlod.) The shelters cater to women and sometimes assist minors, as well. They do not provide specialized care for men. In 2009, the Tashkent shelter served 115 victims. The Bukhara shelter served 39 victims. The government does not provide financial support to these two NGO-run shelters.

As the government generally does not regard forced labor as a trafficking issue, these shelters are not intended to address the needs of the victims of forced labor. In addition, as school children return to school following the harvest and adults return to their normal work duties, their rehabilitations needs are not the same as for those victims of traditional sex and labor trafficking.

1C. The 2008 anti-TIP law mandates that the government provide legal assistance, medical and psychological care, professional development programs, employment assistance, and temporary housing to victims of TIP through funds from the state budget. Programming along these lines is still in its early stages. The NAP tasked provincial governors with providing much of this assistance, but it is not known whether they were provided with a budget for implementing such programs. Local interagency commissions have met in all regions, and their efforts thus far have seemed to focus on prevention programs. The government does not provide direct funding or support to NGOs providing services to trafficking victims, however it does provide venues for NGO training programs and awareness-raising activities.

Currently, the MOL operates regional employment centers. On December 30, 2009, President Karimov issued a decree tasking the MOL to expand social assistance programs in these centers, to better meet the needs of the population. MOL officials in February stated that as a part of that mandate, the MOL is considering ways to assist trafficking victims in job placement, including developing a database to match former victims with open positions.

In December 2009, the Chairwoman of the Women's Committee was quoted in an article saying that in 2009, 34 of 150 repatriated female victims of trafficking were provided with jobs; 101 were provided with legal aid, 55 were provided medical assistance, 26 were provided social assistance, and 24 were enrolled in training courses. (Note: The MVD reported in February 2010 that there were a total of 485 female victims for the year. The reason for the discrepancy is unknown.)

1D. Article 12 of the 2008 anti-TIP legislation states that if a foreign citizen or stateless person is a victim of trafficking or a witness to trafficking, he or she cannot be deported until the end of the criminal case of the traffickers involved. The victim in such a case has the right to stay in Uzbekistan regardless of the circumstances of his or her entry into the country. As stated, however, Uzbekistan is mainly a source country for trafficking, and NGOs have reported no foreign trafficking victims during the reporting period. A strict visa regime (even for transit passengers) and inconvenient, expensive flight networks also make Uzbekistan an impractical transit point.

1E. The Republican Rehabilitation Center typically provides victims with housing and services for 30 days, but extensions of up to 90 days may be authorized. Local governments are tasked with providing local support, including housing and employment assistance, for returned victims, but local governments do not have the resources for extensive assistance measures.

TASHKENT 00000097 011.2 OF 018

1F. The government did not provide information on its internal referral procedures, however, the local NGO Istikbolli Avlod reported improvements in the referral system, noting that standard letters requesting the NGO's assistance in providing services or repatriation assistance have replaced the previous method of ad hoc telephone calls. Istikbolli Avlod also reported that police, consular officials, and border guards frequently referred women returning from abroad who appeared to be trafficking victims to them for services. The OSCE reported that the establishment of a legal aid unit within the NGO Istiqbolli Avlod is part of its work to establish a functional, victim-centered identification and referral mechanism in Uzbekistan.

1G. The government identified 4,660 victims of trafficking during the 2009 calendar year, including 4,016 men and 644 women. Although a breakdown for these final figures was not available, the figures announced for the first nine months of the year showed that about two thirds of all victims are victims of labor trafficking, and one third are victims of sex trafficking. Since the Rehabilitation Center was opened in November, 47 victims were referred there by law enforcement authorities. The government did not release information on the number of victims assisted by government-funded assistance programs.

1H. The government does not have a formal system of proactively identifying victims of trafficking among high-risk persons with whom they come in contact, however, several trainings have been conducted for law enforcement on victim identification. Airport authorities at the main international airport in Tashkent have had specific instructions to be on the lookout for potential TIP victims, and NGOs consistently report that airport authorities are becoming more rigorous in their questioning of Uzbek citizen

travelers. As a result, airports in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were used as alternative gateways.

There are no known foreign sex workers in the country due to strict visa regimes, onerous registration requirements, and a weak economy. Prostitution is illegal under the administrative code, and punishable by 1-5 times the minimum wage of approximately 24 USD. Uzbek law also prohibits brothels and pimping, punishable by fines of 25-50 times the minimum wage (600-1,200 USD) and up to three years of correctional labor.

I. NGOs report that the rights of victims are respected in Uzbekistan, and that much progress has been made in this area over the past few years. The three-year IOM-sponsored law enforcement training program that concluded this year included instruction in this area, and reached about 1,300 law enforcement officers. Victims are generally not detained or jailed, and usually are given a few days following repatriation before they are questioned officially. The 2008 anti-TIP legislation states that TIP victims are free from civil, administrative, and criminal responsibility for actions committed under duress or threat. One exception to this general rule is that victims are sometimes charged with illegal border crossing when they return to Uzbekistan from abroad. Often it is the investigation of these charges that leads to further prosecution of TIP offenders. But despite the law freeing victims from criminal responsibility, often those border crossing charges are not dismissed. Victims charged with illegal border crossing often are not inclined to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking charges against others.

J. The government encourages victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking, and officials from the Prosecutor General's office in February described victim involvement as "crucial" to a successful prosecution. They stated that for this reason, victims participated in practically all of the 815 TIP cases that went to court during 2009.

In addition to assisting in criminal cases, victims may file civil suits or seek legal action against traffickers. Istikbolli Avlod reported that in 2009 its lawyers helped two victims get compensation from recruiters through civil court proceedings. The 2008 anti-TIP legislation states that a person convicted for TIP

TASHKENT 00000097 012.2 OF 018

offenses shall be liable for the rehabilitation of trafficking victims, although there are no procedures in place for going after a defendant's foreign assets if there are none located in Uzbekistan.

There are no formal programs in place to protect victims who might be material witnesses. A victim who is a material witness in a case against a former employer is not forbidden from obtaining other employment pending trial proceedings.

K. The government includes victim identification in its trainings and roundtables for law enforcement officials. The three year IOM training program also included sessions on victim identification, involving psychologists discussing signs that could indicate that someone is a victim. This training did not specifically address child victims. Article 11 of the 2008 legislation specifically addresses the needs of children, however, requiring agencies to notify child custody agencies immediately when they have information on children who may be victims; to place children in specialized agencies separately from adults, with access to educational institutions; and to assist in finding parents or guardians of child victims when their whereabouts are



otherwise unknown.

Information on whether the government provides training on protection and assistance to its embassies and consulates in foreign countries that are destination or transit countries was not available. The number of trafficking victims assisted by its embassies or consulates abroad during the reporting period was also not available. The government does assist in the repatriation of victims by providing travel documents and referrals.

1L. The 2008 anti-TIP legislation requires that the government provide shelter and other reintegration support from the state budget. Although making this requirement a reality will take some time, the government made substantial progress during the reporting period by opening the new Rehabilitation Center, which provides medical aid and shelter. Some financial assistance is given to minors during repatriation, although the sums are small. The government has not had the resources to provide funding to adult victims, but it does cooperate with IOM to provide assistance to repatriated trafficking victims.

1M. IOM works with victims of trafficking through its local affiliate, Istikbolli Avlod. Istikbolli Avlod has a network of ten regional NGOs around the country, and runs the two non-governmental TIP shelters in Tashkent and Bukhara. The shelters provide medical, legal, and vocational services to female victims of TIP and their children. Istikbolli Avlod registered 754 victims of trafficking during the calendar year, involving 461 female and 293 male victims. It assisted in the repatriation of 436 adult victims (337 female, 99 male) and 23 minors. It assisted in the rehabilitation and reintegration of 195 adults (all female) and 7 minors. With assistance from the local OSCE office, Istikbolli Avlod established a legal office with two attorneys on staff to help victims navigate the legal process, and succeeded in securing compensation for victims from TIP recruiters. In 2009, Istikbolli Avlod conducted 609 TIP prevention activities, and more than 46,000 people participated in activities and trainings (22,492 women and 23,532 men). It published 71 newspaper articles on TIP issues. It contributed to 60 television programs and placed 32 television ads; 119 radio programs and 167 radio ads. Istikbolli Avlod operates nine TIP hotlines throughout the country, and in 2009 it tallied 13,691 incoming calls. It placed 90 newspaper advertisements promoting the hotlines. Finally, it participated in the repatriation of 401 adult victims (302 female and 99 male) and 23 minors.

Istikbolli Avlod reports that cooperation with local and national authorities remains strong, and that GOU officials regularly meet and cooperate with them in assisting with repatriation and subsequent readjustment of victims. In the last few months of the reporting period, the government has been requesting Istikbolli Avlod's participation in various prevention activities once or

TASHKENT 00000097 013.2 OF 018

twice per week, suggesting that a strong trust has developed between them.

IOM remains unregistered. It applied for registration during the reporting period, but the government has yet to announce its decision on the matter.

The U.S. Embassy's Democracy Commission supports the Bukhara-based shelter, as well as a project in northwest Uzbekistan that monitors and tries to reduce the number of human trafficking cases in the area. These grant recipients also report cooperative relationships with authorities.

Responses to Paragraph 29: PREVENTION



-----

1A. The government continued its extensive efforts noted last year in increasing awareness of traditional TIP issues during the reporting period. In February, the Prosecutor General announced that more than 18,000 events related to TIP have been carried out since the establishment of the Interagency Commission in 2008. This includes 7,000 programs and articles, including television programs and public service announcements. The Uzbek National Drama Theater put on a TIP-themed play in 2009, translated roughly into "I Suffer for What I have Done." The Prosecutor General's office published more than 4 million brochures, and put up 1,438 billboards and 325, 128 posters. Many of the Prosecutor General's efforts included information on the methods used by trafficking rings.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) engaged in some prevention activities regarding forced child labor. In fall 2009, it sent letters to school directors throughout the country, asking them to certify that they would not send students to participate in the cotton harvest. The MOE also sent letters to local hokims, asking them not to close schools during the cotton harvest. There were some signs that these letter were effective, as one influential hokim in the Ferghana Valley (the largest cotton-producing region of the country) made headlines by forbidding any of the schools in his region from closing in order to send children to the fields.

1B. The MOL reported it distributed 10,000 brochures this year, entitled, "TIP is Slavery." It sponsored 26 radio broadcasts, 16 articles in the mass media, and six television programs. It distributed posters in Tashkent City and Tashkent Region with the heading, "Don't be Deceived," and it produced a serial radio program with the same title. During the first half of 2009, it aired TIP-related programs every Monday and Friday morning, in cooperation with a Tashkent radio station. In addition, it published many articles in central newspapers, and placed 2,000 booklets to airports and railway stations, for distribution to those leaving the country for foreign employment. Billboards and posters were highly visible in Tashkent and in the airports, no doubt reaching many thousands of people in the capital alone. This demonstrates quite a commitment in a country where talking about such problems was taboo only a few years ago.

The Women's Committee announced in a December 2009 article that since July 2008, its working group has conducted 10,000 discussions and meetings, published and aired 2,000 articles and programs, and conducted seminars on a woman's role in anti-TIP activities in eight regions. It also held discussions on TIP in Tashkent and distributed brochures to people traveling abroad for work.

The government did not restrict its efforts to signs and handouts. The MOL in January and February 2009 held several TIP informational meetings in Tashkent in conjunction with local Mahallah Committees (neighborhood administrative units), the National Women's Committee, and other agencies. In March and April, it moved out of the capital, carrying out seminars on labor trafficking and on working legally abroad in each of the fourteen regions. Approximately 2,000 labor inspectors took part in these seminars, targeting unemployed people in order to explain typical trafficking situations and problems. In all, the MOL held 299 round tables and 262 seminars on TIP-related issues. In conjunction with UNICEF,

TASHKENT 00000097 014.2 OF 018

the MOL provided training for labor inspectors in seven regions on forced labor and implementation of ILO conventions regarding child labor. No inspections were done in the cotton fields during the fall harvest, however.

The MOL also worked in cooperation with the Agency for Press and Information to address the publication of advertisements for questionable work opportunities abroad. The DOL reported in February that through its efforts, the number of "dubious" ads for overseas employment has been substantially reduced.

1C. Currently, the government does not have the capacity to methodically monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. Airport officials have reportedly been very successful at identifying potential victims at the airports, but a high percentage of labor trafficking victims travel across land borders. Border guards have been instructed to screen for trafficking victims at key exit points, but many people cross at unauthorized border crossing points. Thus, a complete analysis is difficult. Officials hope that the biometric passport system still in development will improve its capacity to track migration data. That program is scheduled for completion in 2011.

Regional interagency commissions chaired by local hokims (governors and mayors) are in place in each of the 12 provinces. The MVD has a special unit that coordinates its activities throughout the country. This year, the MOL established an internal working group to deal with prevention issues. Through its periodic meetings, it also focuses on implementation of the NAP. The Prosecutor General's Office also has a Working Group for implementation of the NAP.

The National Action Plan regarding implementation of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 assigns responsibilities to several different agencies and ministries, and the First Deputy Prime Minister has oversight responsibilities. Goals of the plan include the establishment of a special consultative council on prohibition of the worst forms of child labor, which would be under the purview of the Commission of Minors in the Cabinet of Ministers. So far, however, interagency coordination has been done on an ad hoc basis.

1D. The government adopted its NAP on Combating Trafficking in Persons on July 25, 2008, and it remains in effect through 2010. The government made progress on many of the items in the plan during the reporting period. Most notably, it opened the Rehabilitation Center for victims of TIP. The extensive awareness campaigns carried out during the reporting period are also pursuant to the NAP.

With the NAP in place, interagency communication on TIP issues seemed to improve during the reporting period. In February 2009, the MOL held roundtable discussions with MVD personnel and its anti-terrorism department. In various discussions, the MOL provided information received from its two trafficking hotlines to the MVD and the Prosecutor General for follow up. (Note: Of the 34 TIP-related calls that came in, all 34 were from victims. Nineteen of them informed about individual perpetrators, and the remainder on criminal networks.) In October 2009, the MVD held an open lecture for MOL staff working on TIP issues. A similar meeting in January 2010 involved speakers from the newly opened Rehabilitation Center.

The MOL also reported improved internal procedures, in furtherance of the goals in the NAP. In December 2009, it published a book of documents related to labor migration and TIP, and distributed them to labor inspectors in December 2009 and January 2010. It conducted TIP prevention seminars for labor inspectors in eight of the twelve regions of the country. The MOL also established a working group this year to focus on TIP prevention issues.

Having learned through its hotlines that most trafficking victims were deceived by people offering legitimate employment, the MOL reported that it is increasing its efforts to increase the legal

employment opportunities of Uzbek citizens abroad. In 2009, Russia agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding with Uzbekistan on labor migration, the purpose of which was to ensure the rights of migrant workers in both countries. Following this agreement, the MOL's Agency for Foreign Labor Migration sent a delegation to Siberia to discuss opportunities for labor migrants from Uzbekistan. This agency also sent invitations to other European and Asian countries to set up similar agreements. It sent a draft Memorandum of Understanding to Germany for such an agreement, and will send a delegation in March 2010 to follow up on the invitation. A similar MOU is being discussed with the Czech Republic, and agreements with Oman and Qatar are being considered. MOL officials stated that the global financial crisis has made coming to agreement more difficult, as countries now have higher domestic unemployment rates and are less inclined to open up to foreign labor forces. (The Scandinavian countries reportedly refused overtures along these lines for that reason.) Nevertheless, the MOL intends to continue its efforts to find legal employment opportunities for its citizens abroad.

In September 2008, the government adopted a National Action Plan (in effect through 2010) on Implementation of ILO Conventions 138 and 182, which serves as its framework for addressing child labor, including forced child labor. The Plan involves 21 different agencies, and it has three main sections: strengthening the anti-child labor legislative framework; enhancing the monitoring mechanisms of child labor; and engaging in awareness raising campaigns on the worst forms of child labor. The Plan also includes mechanisms for implementation of the ILO conventions, deadlines for performance, and the ministries responsible for each activity. Articles 11 and 12 in the Plan expressly prohibit forced labor by school children and call for mechanisms to ensure school attendance. Other articles of the Plan refer to data gathering, accounting, inspection, permanent monitoring to ensure national compliance of the ILO conventions, and participation by Uzbek officials in international discussions on child labor.

The government completed some of the goals articulated in the National Action Plan this year. The June 2009 MOL list of activities that may be harmful to the health and safety of an adolescent under than 18 years was adopted directly pursuant to the Plan, as was the change to the minimum age of employment in the law "guaranteeing the rights of the child." The amendments to the administrative and labor codes, which impose penalties on individual farmers and parents using forced child labor and increased fines for officials engaged in such activities, were also directly pursuant to the Plan. The January 2010 Joint Decree put out by the Ministries of Labor and Health and the efforts the MOE took to keep the schools open in the fall furthered the goals of the plan. The government established a child labor working group within the Ministry of Labor to oversee implementation of the Plan. It also worked with UNICEF on an awareness campaign, and conducted some training of labor inspectors that reportedly touched on child labor, in furtherance of the Plan.

Several aspects of the plan have yet to be addressed, including improved monitoring of child labor; training of public education, law enforcement and NGO employees on best practices involving elimination of the worst forms of child labor, and awareness-raising on the negative consequences of engaging children in the worst forms of child labor.

1E. Uzbekistan is overwhelmingly a source country for TIP, and is focused on preventing its citizens from becoming victims abroad. It has not directed efforts to reducing the demand for commercial sex acts. Intensive efforts to raise general awareness of the problem do, however, serve the dual-purpose of informing commercial sex clients in the country of the terrible circumstances TIP victims may face.

¶F. As a source country, Uzbekistan has not focused its efforts on reducing the participation in international child sex tourism by Uzbek nationals. Uzbekistan controls the departure of its citizens by requiring exit visas, and could be in a position to stop known or wanted offenders from traveling overseas.

¶G. Uzbekistan has not contributed troops for international peacekeeping efforts, therefore this section is not applicable.

TASHKENT 00000097 016.2 OF 018

Response to Paragraph 30: Partnerships

-----

¶A. The government has devoted considerable energy to engagement with other governments, civil society, and multilateral organizations on traditional TIP issues. It has worked in conjunction with several diplomatic missions on addressing TIP issues, notably, the French, Israeli and U.S. Embassies, sending officials to conferences and providing other educational opportunities.

The OSCE office in Tashkent provides assistance in TIP programming with the goal of establishing a functional, victim-centered identification and referral mechanism and the development of a longer term strategy for social inclusion of victims. In cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the French Ministry of the Interior, the OSCE organized an Anti-Trafficking Study Tour to Moldova, Italy, and France for seven officials of Uzbek anti-trafficking agencies. The participants submitted a joint report following the trip with recommendations, including the development of mechanisms for victim identification and the creation of a referral structure within the MVD to work closely with NGOs.

The OSCE in 2009 initiated the creation of a legal aid unit with the NGO Istiqbolli Avlod, and supports the work of two attorneys who provide legal assistance to trafficking victims. The OSCE reported that over a two month period, the legal aid unit provided 95 consultations on issues of migration and identified 16 cases of human trafficking. The attorneys followed up these cases with legal assistance, protecting the victims' rights during the investigation process and court hearings, the preparation of documents, and assistance in housing and employment

In November 2009, the OSCE convened a workshop on "Protecting the Rights of Trafficked Persons," bringing together 25 defense attorneys from Uzbekistan and international experts from France, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. Participants shared best practices on providing effective legal aid to the victims of human trafficking, as well as identifying problems and finding solutions to existing legal and practical barriers.

The government signed an MOU with the UNODC in 2009, in which both parties agreed to continue their cooperative anti-TIP efforts, among other things. The UNODC sponsored a study tour to India in 2009 for officials from five Uzbek ministries. The delegation met with counterparts, visited shelters, and exchanged ideas with law enforcement officials. In response to a request from Uzbekistan's Supreme Court, the UNODC published 1,000 copies of a compendium of human rights documents and treaties to which Uzbekistan is a party (including TIP-related documents), for distribution to Uzbekistan's 1,000 judges. UNODC has provided helpful materials to assist in the establishment of the shelter for TIP victims. UNODC reports good cooperation amongst the various ministries, and said that the MVD has expressed its support for extending UNODC's project

parameters.

In May 2009, UNODC sponsored a three-day workshop on international and national mechanisms of combating human trafficking and protecting victims of human trafficking. Approximately 35 Uzbek government officials participated, representing the MVD, MFA, Prosecutor General's Office, National Security Service, and Supreme Court. A specialist at the workshop helped to develop a training module for law enforcement in Uzbekistan on best practices in detection and investigation of trafficking crimes, as well as prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims.

The UNODC and OSCE in May 2008 sponsored the first annual regional  
TASHKENT 00000097 017.2 OF 018

workshop on international cooperation among source, transit, and destination countries to combat human trafficking in Central Asia. This workshop focused on the extradition of traffickers and identification and protection of victims. In November 2009, the second annual workshop took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, and included law enforcement, prosecutorial and judicial authorities, and NGOs from all five Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, France, Italy, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkey, the UAE, and the U.S. (Note: U.S. Embassy Ashgabat funded the travel for one U.S. prosecutor and one Official from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office [ICE] to attend.) Nongovernmental participants included IOM, Interpol, the OSCE, and Eurojust. The workshop focused on best practices in the following areas: criminalization of human trafficking; cooperation between law enforcement agencies and NGOs; information exchange among law enforcement groups; international mutual legal assistance; and proper adjudication of cases. The Uzbek delegation (and other delegations) presented its main laws and practices on transnational TIP offenses, and explained problems regarding investigations, prosecution, and adjudication of the cases. The UAE is considering hosting the conference in 2010, and the organizers would like to expand participation to include representatives from India and Bangladesh. Participation in such conferences shows Uzbekistan's willingness to move forward in cooperation with other countries on anti-TIP efforts, and highlights areas where improvements can be made.

The government works closely with IOM and its local implementer, Istikbolli Avlod. IOM sent Uzbek delegations on study visits in June 2009 to Poland and July 2009 to Turkey to meet with counterparts, compare best practices, and improve international communication related to prosecuting trafficking cases and providing assistance to victims. Representatives from Istikbolli Avlod report cooperative relationships at all levels of the government, from ministers down to local police who help address neighborhood concerns about shelters. In looking to improve its legislative regime, the government even contacted Istikbolli Avlod attorneys for suggestions to the criminal code and anti-trafficking laws. IOM representatives based in Astana also report cooperative relationships with Uzbek officials.

In April 2009, the government entered into an Annual Work Plan with UNICEF to address child labor, specifically targeting child labor in the cotton sector. The Work Plan addressed several goals, including monitoring and implementation of the National Action Plan, raising awareness of national and international legislation on child labor; conducting training programs for labor inspectors, local administrators, teachers, farmers, and other relevant parties; and developing community-based prevention programs. Pursuant to the Plan, UNICEF conducted a knowledge and attitude survey to identify the level of knowledge of children, parents, government officials and farmers on existing legislation regarding child labor and to identify their attitudes toward child work, child labor, and the value of education. Its study showed that people are generally aware of the government's recent increased

recent commitment to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. For some, however, involvement of children in cotton picking is still perceived as a necessary, normal component of children's educational or social development.

UNICEF also conducted an awareness-raising campaign, holding meetings on child labor with parents and school administrators in all provinces of the country in an effort to change societal attitudes on child labor and increase the population's knowledge of child rights and protection from forced labor. As part of this program, UNICEF developed and distributed advocacy materials through farmers associations, schools, and local government administrative offices, as well as local branches of the Human Rights Ombudsman and the MOL. UNICEF conducted a series of trainings for labor inspectors, local administrators, teachers, school administrators, prosecutors, staff of the ombudsman offices, police, and farmers. It also supported the training of the 200 labor inspectors pursuant to this Plan, although the training did not address child labor in the cotton fields specifically. The government also allowed UNICEF to do limited monitoring of child labor during the fall cotton harvest. UNICEF reports that cooperation with government entities on child labor is steadily improving.

The government entered into an agreement with the World Bank in

TASHKENT 00000097 018.2 OF 018

2009, under which the World Bank will provide low-interest financing to farmers on the condition that the farmers certify that they will not use child labor on their land. Under this agreement, the World Bank anticipates being able to monitor the cotton harvest on the land of those farmers receiving funding as a way of ensuring that their contractual commitments are being met.

1B. The government does not provide international assistance to other countries to address TIP.

Response to Paragraph 33: THE CHILD SOLDIERS PREVENTION ACT

Uzbekistan has never been the subject of allegations regarding unlawful child soldiering, and this section therefore is not applicable.

NOMINATION OF HEROES AND BEST PRACTICES

1A. HEROES: Post would like to nominate Natalia Abdullayeva as an anti-trafficking hero. Abdullaeva has been working to combat human trafficking since 2003, when she became involved in an IOM counter-trafficking project supported by USAID. Between 2003 and 2008 she actively sought registration for an anti-trafficking organization in northwestern Uzbekistan, but was consistently denied. She continued to work on TIP issues under the auspices of other organizations doing related work until 2009, when she was finally granted registration for her own NGO, named "Isenim" ("Trust"), to specifically address TIP problems. Her organization is one of only a handful of NGOs to secure registration since 2005.

In northwestern Uzbekistan, specifically around the city of Nukus and throughout the semiautonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, labor



migration and trafficking is a sad reality, with some cities almost completely devoid of working-age men. Abdulaeva has shown great enthusiasm and innovative approaches to trafficking prevention, publishing anti-TIP advertisements and disseminating them in the markets and buses heading for Kazakhstan, and even conducting mini-TIP information sessions on regular private shuttles en route to the border. In addition, she has developed partnerships with the private sector, cooperating with the local cellular phone company to disseminate free SMS messages with anti-TIP information and a hotline number to subscribers. Moreover, Abdullaeva has established good cooperation with the Karakalpak Ministry of Internal Affairs, and is now working jointly with them on trafficking prevention and repatriation of victims.

Post commends Abdulaeva for her tireless efforts, and nominates her as an anti-trafficking hero. A search of the CLASS system and law enforcement databases has revealed no derogatory information or visa ineligibilities.

B. COMMENDABLE INITIATIVES: Istikbolli Avlod's Jizzakh branch has instituted an innovative peer-to-peer outreach project to inform young people about the dangers of TIP. The NGO has trained 46 young trainers, many of them still in high school themselves, to visit schools and talk to students about human trafficking using interactive games, role plays, videos, and question and answer sessions. It's difficult to measure the impact of such a prevention program, but organizers report that youth are more likely to talk freely with these young trainers than with other adults, and that the program has been well-received by both students and school administrators. Post commends Istikbolli Avlod's creative outreach effort.

NORLAND  
NORLAND